



Spring 2014

# The Sage Page Spring 2014

Winthrop University Honors Association

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# The Sage Page

Spring 2014

## From the Honors Program Director

### Recent Developments in the Honors Program

- Honors ACAD Volunteers
- Service Learning Updates: Relay for Life
- Student Honors Courses Review

Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of The Sage Page. Inside this newsletter you will see that our Honors Program students have been actively involved in their honors courses, service learning activities and social events. As with previous editions, the students have provided you with interesting articles on their activities including their Quiz Bowl Tournament, Relay for Life service activities, and their Bigs and Littles Program. Rachel Burns, the Sage Page editor, prepared an article on

her very moving experience during Alternative Spring Break, and Emily Carter wrote about her wonderful study abroad experience in Buenos Aires. I particularly want to thank Donald Rakestraw for offering his HONR231H "The Culture of the Cold War" course and writing about his experience teaching honors students.

I want to also thank each student who contributed to this edition and honors alumni for keeping us informed on your

interests and concerns. Please contact us about any updates. Enjoy!



*Kathy Lyon, Ph.D.  
Honors Program Director*

### Inside this issue:

## WUHA! Freshmen Volunteer

- |                               |   |  |
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| Why I Teach Honors            | 2 | This fall, my ACAD101H class, taught by Dr. Lyon, volunteered at Richmond Drive Elementary School.   |
| Honors Course Reflections     | 3 | We allowed the third grade students to take home books that we had   |
| Honors Life                   | 4 | donated throughout the semester. During the  |
| Ways to Get Involved          | 5 | afternoon, we read to, and with, the third graders, acted out a play of <i>The Three Little Pigs</i> , and let the younger students express their creativity by drawing and coloring. They were able to choose between reading and |
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listening to us read to them. Several of my ACAD101H classmates performed as actors in the play written by the ACAD Program Director. The children loved the play and even requested autographs at the end of the performance. The

coloring activity proved to be fun for the children; we discovered some mini-Picassos!

Overall, all of the students, both university and elementary, had a blast!



# Academia!

## WUHA! Members Compete in Quiz Bowl Tournament

**Cody Knight**

On January 27, Longwood University hosted the 2014 Big South Conference Quiz Bowl. Attending on behalf of Winthrop University, five students traveled to Farmville, Virginia to compete in this rigorous battle of sporadic knowledge. Guided by their coach John Timmons, WUHA! members Amber Schilling, Destinee Johnson, Rachel Burns, Alex Muller, and Cody Knight arrived at the competition enthusiastic about their chances at victory.

The team plowed through a few early bumps and pulled out two impressive wins against Presbyterian College and Radford University to emerge sixth out of nine teams with a record of (2-6).

While in Virginia, each of the students obtained a rare opportunity to not only be ambassadors on behalf of Winthrop but to build fellowship with other students in the Big South.



*Team members left to right: Destinee, Rachel, Amber, Alex, and Cody*

## Professor Rakestraw: Why I Teach Honors

Pistol: "Why, then, the world is mine oyster, Which I with sword will open." *Merry Wives of Windsor* (2:2:5).

I often use the above line from Shakespeare to remind undergraduates that, before Pistol's boast morphed into the idiom "the world is your oyster," it had included that essential act involving the sword. While a student's time at university, indeed, holds tremendous potential, there is also action required to realize that potential. In other words, it is not enough to have

access to the oyster; it must be opened.

I teach Honors because students who choose this path through higher education form a cohort of eager young scholars armed "with sword" to open the oyster. They understand that the "higher" in higher education implies action: climbing, reaching, stretching, and—to apply an Eagle verb—rising.

I teach Honors because the program at Winthrop provides the ideal environment for shared

learning, where all participants understand and embrace their roles and where challenge is not only assumed, but welcomed.

Finally, I teach Honors for the opportunity to interact with engaged students across disciplines—students who, because of their diverse interests and experiences, bring stimulating and often provocative perspectives to the seminar table.

*Professor Donald Rakestraw is University College Professor of American Studies.*

## Reflection on Honors Courses from Fall 2013

### *Jessica Doscher*

During the fall of 2013, I took the honors section of “The Arthurian Tradition” (ENGL 307H). Walking into the class was intimidating, to say the least. The professor came sweeping in on the first day and dove enthusiastically straight in to the material. Then, came the readings and the inherent pity for any poor soul who fell behind. The honors students in the class were also expected to read a little extra here and there, but the largest defining factor was the 10-12 page research paper that we were to write at the end of the year, a paper that would then be revised to fit a conference, abstract and all. That was daunting. But that fear didn’t last long.

I was exposed to diverse readings that expanded across centuries, discussed the possibility of a real King Arthur, analyzed common factors in many of the Arthurian stories, and, of course, got to watch Monty Python and the Holy Grail. But more than that, I learned how to find confidence in my writing. I learned that it doesn’t matter how young I am, or how little experience I’ve had. I learned just how incredible Winthrop’s professors are, especially when they let you sit in their office and talk about Sherlock for half an hour.

But, if I learned anything during my semester in “The Arthurian Tradition,” it is that confidence is

key. I gained immeasurable knowledge, not just about the Arthurian realm, but about writing, analysis, research, and even a little about myself. I don’t know where I would be now if I hadn’t taken that class. And if you’ve taken anything from this, I hope it’s an understanding of the fantastic value of Winthrop’s honors courses.



### *Michaela Bishop*

In the 2013 fall semester, I took Human Evolution & Religion (which was cross-listed as BIOL540H, RELG350H and ANTH350H). In the previous semester I had taken Biological Anthropology with Dr. Chism and was pleasantly surprised to find that I loved learning about the scientific background of evolution. So when at the end of the semester Dr. Chism asked that I take HE&R, I immediately jumped on the opportunity to connect what I had learned about evolution with my religious views.

The main theme of the class was to pinpoint the origin of morality and find what separates humans from primates through multiple readings and in-depth discussions. The professors, Dr. Chism and Dr. Kiblinger, created a great balance of

information with their respective backgrounds in anthropology and religion. The readings gave us insight into how other cultures have evolved and what our common ancestor with primates was like.

Our discussions led us to the conclusion that humans’ evolved sense of morality sets us apart and gives us a spark that allows us to be the dominant race. Because we are self-aware we have the ability to know the difference between right and wrong and don’t have to analyze every small decision, such as opening the door for a stranger or not. Morality is so engrained in our minds and bodies that we are most inherently good.

The part I liked most about the class was that it wasn’t presented as a right or wrong forum. As long as we were well informed by the readings, we could freely discuss with the class and come to our own conclusions. There was no guide of what exactly we were supposed to learn each week, simply what we were meant to discuss. The professors never force a view upon you, but rather give you the tools to draw your own informed conclusion. I highly recommend this class to anyone who (a) loves discussion or (b) has thoughts or questions about human evolution and religion and how the two connect.



# Honors Life!

## WUHA! Prepares for Relay for Life

*Christine Davenport*

During the spring semester, the members of WUHA! focused most of their time and energy on preparing for Relay for Life. Relay for Life is sponsored by the American Cancer Society in an effort to raise money and fund cancer research. WUHA! supported this cause and held many fundraisers to try to reach the team goal of \$1500. The first fundraiser held was with Krispy Kreme. Students sold doughnuts to their friends, families, and classmates. The team made about \$230 from this fundraiser. WUHA! also

hosted several Spirit Nights at TCBY to raise money.

The biggest fundraiser WUHA! hosted was Trivia Night, for which the theme was "Ready. Set. Reverse" in honor of all of the 90s babies. Winthrop students were encouraged to attend Trivia Night to support the cause. Each team member brought a gift card or gift basket donation collected from businesses around town. Gift cards were used as prizes for the teams that had the most points. The gift baskets were set up in a silent auction to help the

team raise more money. Tables were set up with refreshments and luminaries for students to purchase. The luminaries were used to honor those who fought the battle against cancer. They were displayed around the track the night of Relay.

The last bit of funds for the team to raise came from the Relay event. During the event, we had refreshments to sell as people walked around the track. We stayed up from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. to raise money. We didn't sleep because cancer never sleeps! And we reached our goal!

## Pictures from Trivia Night



*From right: participants bid on gifts; points are tallied to see which team will win a mystery prize; the hosts for the evening, WUHA! officers Amber Schilling and Rachel Burns*



# Carrying on the Dream

*Rachel Burns*

I was at the end of my rope. Life as a college student had been getting to me as problem upon problem walled me in, and I was just living until that sweet, yearly respite: Spring Break. And then I remembered that I had signed up for an Alternative Spring Break trip with the Center for Career and Civic Engagement on campus. There were three ASB trips organized, and I had applied to the one in Selma, Ala. In November it had seemed such a wonderful idea in the abstract, but as I was going over the packing list the night before and grabbing a sleeping bag, I regretted my commitment. At the end of the week, however, I couldn't have been more thankful that I decided to go.

The Honors Program requires a service learning project or course to be completed by the time of graduation and heavily encourages additional service projects to promote community involvement. I had once thought of these requirements as dreary obstacles to put behind me as quickly as possible, but upon arrival in Selma, I realized the personal importance of service learning. As soon as we drove over the Edmund Pettus Bridge, crossing the Alabama River, the atmosphere of our car darkened. We had yet to learn about the shadow over Selma.

I had selected Selma because it was advertised as a Civil Rights trip with some youth components, but I soon learned that it was much more than that. On that first afternoon we entered the only racially integrated church in town, which the Freedom Foundation uses as its base of operations. We were introduced to several enthusiastic volunteers who told us that they were former ASBers and had felt the need to

return to Selma. They described the conditions in the town: how all the white children go to one of two private schools, how the murder rate in the town of around 20,000 is five times the national average, how many in the community still don't have running water, and how we were an extraordinary group because we were composed of both white and black students who treated each other as equals. Towards the end of the week, as we went to the Rosa Parks museum and the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Ala., we even started joking that we were sisters.

As the week progressed, I realized the historical significance of Selma. The March from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., in 1965 led to the signing of the Voting Rights Act in that same year. Martin Luther King Jr. personally led those marches. To see a place that had burned so brightly for equality fifty years ago be mired in racial tensions really opened my eyes to my own naïveté, especially as the week progressed, and we got more involved with the community.

The Winthrop team, with other schools from all over the country, helped with construction, volunteered in schools, and got to meet some of the children from the town who are involved with the Freedom Foundation's Random Acts of Theater Company (RatCo), which encourages youth to express themselves. Many of these children have

been in gangs, sold drugs to survive, and need the positive community to help them discover their potential.

I am proud of Winthrop and the Honors Program for promoting diversity as much as they do because I know what ignorance and intolerance look like now thanks to Selma. But, I have also seen the beauty of human kindness and respect for individuals regardless of race or religion.



For more information on the Freedom Foundation go to [www.freedomfoundation.org/](http://www.freedomfoundation.org/)





## Study Abroad: Buenos Aires, Argentina

**Emily Carter**

Ever since I was old enough to know what college was, it was my dream to study abroad. I didn't know how, and I didn't know where, but I knew I was going somewhere. The sophomore blues hit me hard, and I was anxious to get out at all costs. I felt claustrophobic and began questioning the very reasons of why I was in college in the first place. I needed to escape. Prior to attending Winthrop I had traveled to Europe and Asia resulting in a chronic case of the travel bug. I wanted to see somewhere new, somewhere that placed me far outside my comfort zone. I chose Buenos Aires, Argentina because it would help me get language credits for school and was completely different than anywhere I had been before. Admittedly, when I boarded the plane to fly south I had my hesitations. I did not know the language in the least bit, and I didn't know any of the other students who were coming from the United States – I was terrified. At the time, I would not have admitted that, but by the third day I had my first meltdown. The ability to communicate is something that I will never take for granted again. I was never very good at charades, but by the time I left I was a pro.

After the initial culture shock wore off, I have never loved a place more. Buenos Aires is a city with a unique pulse. Walking along the streets from classes, I would sometimes stop in a café or sit in a landscaped plaza and feel the thrumming heated discussions vibrate around me. Argentinians are some of the most welcoming, loving people I have ever met; they are engaged and passionate about what goes on around them and appreciate life on a level that is often overlooked by people from the U.S.

It was easy to forget that I was in Buenos Aires and not some European city, that is, until someone started shouting “Cambio, cambio!” (change) at you because you are obviously a foreigner. Traveling to different areas outside of Buenos Aires provided a unique perspective – it was like going to a different country. The people are just as warm, but much less Europeanized. My first experience traveling outside the city was when I went to Iguazu Falls, located about 18 hours north of Buenos Aires, by bus, on the border with Brazil; one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. This was the first time I had ever stayed in a hostel, but on the first night I fell in love. While there, our group met other travelers from France, Australia, and The Netherlands. We sat all night and talked about our experiences while someone played a guitar – it was just like a movie. The next morning we made our way to the falls, unaware of what awaited us.

Imagine raw, unbridled power then multiply it by one hundred, and there is still no way to convey the force of the falls. With over 230 falls located along the border of Brazil and Argentina, there is an ever-changing view. We hiked around all day; got attacked by a seemingly innocent-looking coatis, a sloth-like animal; got lost a couple of times; and saw a monkey. On one of the trails you can almost get right under the sheet of water, while others allow you to see across the span of falls. My favorite was The Devil's Throat. Walking up to this fall it looks like the earth has been split in two and just collapses on itself. Not only can you hear the drumming of the falls, but you can also feel it. It becomes a part of you.

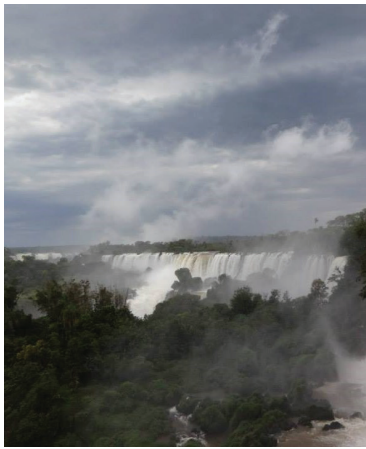
To say that I left that day a different person would not be over-romanticizing things. In the spray of Iguazu, I was cleansed of everything that had been holding me back. It's like I left my old life from the States and officially began my journey.

Studying in Argentina has helped me regain focus and motivation, and has given me a greater sense of appreciation for everything in my life. I feel I also have a heightened awareness of the world around me, and I am able to better articulate myself to others. This may also be contributed to a greater degree of confidence and independence.

I fell in love with Argentina, and my experience has taught me so many things about myself that I don't think I would have learned had I stayed in South Carolina.



*Above: Emily enjoying the beautiful natural scenery of Argentina!*



*Picture's from Emily's adventures: one of the waterfalls, a beautiful sign for Buenos Aires, Emily having a cup of coffee, and scenery from the city.*

## Big and Little Bonding

### **Holly Rittenberry and Julia Greiner**

**Holly:** "Having a Big has been an amazing experience. Coming to Winthrop was a big change for me, but my Big, Julia Greiner, served not only as my mentor, but as my friend. I wasn't really sure of what to expect to come from having a Big, but I am happy to say that she has become one of my really good friends. Sharing the same major, Julia is there to answer any question I have, and always encourages me to get involved in the Athletic Training Club. I know that she is always there for anything I need, educational or personal. And whether we are picking up trash off the side of the road or going to a Christmas social, I love spending time with my Big!"

**Julia:** "When you hear 'Bigs and Littles,' usually something having

to do with Greek life comes to mind, but how about Geek life? Having a Bigs and Littles Program within our Honors community is a wonderful way to become acquainted with the new incoming classes. It is a great opportunity to mentor a younger student and to really connect on another level. I have been a Big for the past two years now, and it is a great experience. This year I was paired with Holly Rittenberry, an athletic training student. Being an athletic training major, as well, has made this a wonderful and unique journey. My Little and I not only share casual laughs and conversation, but I am able to help her throughout her educational endeavor as well. As the President of the Athletic Training Club, I am able to get her involved and utilize the Bigs and Littles Program to its fullest. I absolutely love having Holly as my Little, and we truly are

a great fit. From participating in Adopt-a-Highway community service, to attending spirit nights and having taping parties, I am excited to see our relationship grow! I couldn't have asked for a better Little!"







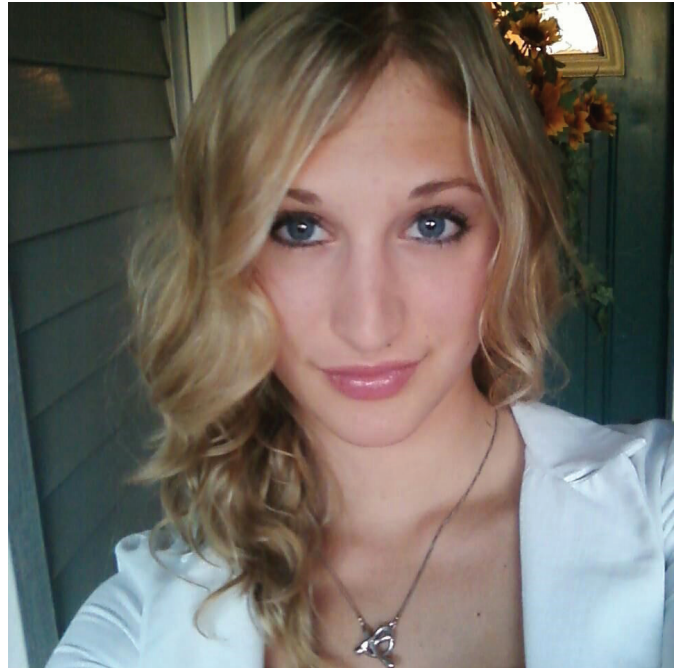
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## Dedication



This edition of The Sage Page is dedicated to Abby Carroll who is dearly missed by her Winthrop family.

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